

or litigation. In January, the winner of this election will place his hand on a Bible, just like it has happened every 4 years since 1793.

What we know for sure is that the outcome is guaranteed to delight tens of millions of Americans and disappoint tens of millions of Americans. But we also know that we will wake up on January 21, still blessed to live in the greatest Nation the world has ever seen. And in no small part, that is because we respect the rule of law, we trust our institutions, and neither of those things is outweighed by pronouncements from partisans or the press.

CORONAVIRUS

Now, on an entirely different matter, Mr. President. The last several days have brought huge good news in our fight to beat this terrible virus.

This morning, one drug manufacturer announced that ongoing trials suggest their candidate for a COVID-19 vaccine may be more than 90 percent effective—90 percent effective.

This is a huge testament to the ingenuity of the American private sector and their global partners and to the historic efforts of Congress and the Trump administration. We flattened regulatory roadblocks, we sped up trials, and laid ground work to buy and distribute a vaccine as fast as possible.

Last week, we learned the unemployment rate has fallen to 6.9 percent—6.9 percent—with more than 630,000 new jobs added just in the month of October. Now, remember back in the springtime, many experts estimated we would still be saddled with double-digit joblessness through the end of this year. It turns out the news is a whole lot better, another testament to the strong economic foundations that Congress and the Trump administration spent 3 years laying before the pandemic struck and most of all to the resilience—the incredible resilience of the American people.

So, to be clear, our work is not finished. Too many Americans are still suffering economically, and infections are climbing across the country. We cannot give up on commonsense measures like wearing masks just because we have grown tired of them.

The Senate is going to have a busy few weeks. I hope our Democratic colleagues will finally put aside their all-or-nothing obstruction and let the targeted pandemic relief—targeted pandemic relief is what we need—let it move forward.

In any event, we will need to fund the government, reach agreement with the House on the National Defense Authorization Act, and confirm more thoroughly qualified nominees.

So I welcome all my colleagues back to the Chamber, and I look forward to finishing this year strong. Our States and our country are counting on us.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

2020 ELECTIONS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, last Tuesday, our country conducted the most sacred process in our democratic system of government, a national election.

It was an election unlike any other in modern history. Much of the voting was done before election day itself, as the global pandemic forced States to adjust their balloting and voting procedures. The counting of the vote took a little longer than most Americans might have expected or hoped. Indeed, some of the final tabulations are not yet complete. It is still to be determined which party will hold the majority in this Chamber.

But we do know a few things. First and most importantly, former Vice President Joseph Robinette Biden will become the 46th President of the United States. Our dear colleague, the distinguished Senator from California, KAMALA HARRIS, will be the next Vice President of the United States. And on January 20, the country will finally—finally—turn the page on one of the most divisive and chaotic chapters in our history.

President-Elect Joe Biden has told the country that it is time to come together and heal, to unify once again to fight not our political opponents but our common enemies: disease and poverty and injustice. There is no person better suited to the task than the former Vice President. He will be a great President for all Americans.

Vice President-Elect HARRIS, meanwhile, has just made history four times over. She will be the first African-American woman, the first Asian-American woman, the first biracial woman, and the first woman, period, to ever serve as Vice President of the United States.

I congratulate the former Vice President, his wife Jill, our colleague Senator HARRIS, and her husband Doug on their hard-fought victory.

More Americans voted for President-Elect Biden and Vice President-Elect HARRIS than any ticket in our Nation's history. They have given them an enormous burden and a decisive mandate to take the reins of the executive branch and marshal this government into action—for they will assume the high offices of the Presidency and the Vice Presidency at a time of unprecedented challenge.

Our great Nation faces the greatest economic crisis in 75 years and the greatest public health crisis in a century. Extraordinary inequalities of wealth and income strike at the heart of the idea of America as a land of equal opportunity. Racial disparities in our society strike at the heart of the

idea of America as a place of equal justice. Climate change threatens the very future of our planet.

The American people have placed their faith in President-Elect Biden to confront those challenges head-on: to relieve their suffering, to repair our democracy, to recover our economy, and rebuild the country and a planet for this generation and for the next. I have no doubt their faith will be rewarded, but I also have no doubt that the task ahead is daunting.

CORONAVIRUS

While the country prepares for a change in administration, it must also brace for the darkest days of the COVID-19 pandemic. Over the weekend, the United States recorded its 10 millionth case. We are now confirming nearly 100,000 new cases of COVID per day, on track to eclipse more than a million cases per week.

As exhausted and impatient as we all are for our lives and livelihoods to return to normal, experts are warning us that the worst phase is still ahead. The quickest way to turn the tide, crush the virus, and get back to normal is to do what we should have been doing all along: take the virus seriously, listen to the scientists, and dedicate the necessary resources to get the job done.

President-Elect Biden is already preparing to do just that. Today, he named several health experts and scientific advisers to serve on a COVID-19 task force. It sends the right signal that while the President-elect will not assume office for another few months, his administration will hit the ground running, and its policy on COVID-19 will refreshingly be dictated by facts and by science.

It is a major turning point that soon we will have an administration that actually acknowledges that this is a healthcare crisis; that knows our economy won't fully recover until we solve it. I am confident that a Biden administration will do that, but Congress must play its part too.

Nearly 15 million Americans have lost health insurance through their employer. Democrats have a solution to that problem. Let's get it done and make sure those families have health coverage.

Medicaid Programs across the country are experiencing a huge influx of new enrollees, while State budgets struggle to bear the added costs. The Heroes Act ensures that Medicaid is strengthened and secured for the duration of this pandemic. Let's get that done too.

And today, we received news that the entire world has been waiting for. A U.S. company has developed a vaccine for COVID-19 that, according to the preliminary research and the news reports, is 90 percent effective. The FDA said it would approve a vaccine that was 50 percent effective. So while the FDA needs to review the vaccine, to have a vaccine that is 90 percent effective is about as good as it gets.

We Democrats will do everything we can to make sure this vaccine or any

vaccine is distributed quickly, fairly, equitably, and the challenge is now one of scale and one of delivery. Congress should fund a national vaccination program, and the administration, whether it is the Trump administration or the Biden administration, must do everything to reach minority and underserved communities, combat vaccine hesitancy, and ensure that the vaccines are free to everyone. This will be a massive and complex undertaking unlike anything that our country has seen, and we must all work together—from the President to Congress, down to local community health departments—to ensure that it gets done right and it gets done fairly and it gets done equitably.

So while the incoming administration prepares to take on the surge of COVID-19, Congress should pass a strong, comprehensive COVID relief bill that actually meets the needs of the American people.

When it comes to health care, education, testing, tracing, unemployment benefits, and many other critical issues, this Republican majority has proposed totally inadequate solutions. As the disease surges across our country once again, there is no time for inadequate solutions.

I hope, now that the election is behind us, our colleagues are ready to come together in a search for an adequate bipartisan solution rather than the partisan, stunt-voting legislating we have suffered these past few months.

2020 ELECTIONS

Now I must spend a moment on something that will garner too much attention over the next few weeks: baseless claims by the President and his supporters that there has been widespread voter fraud and that the election was somehow rigged or stolen from President Trump.

That kind of rhetoric is extremely dangerous and extremely poisonous to our democracy. As in any campaign, the President has a right to bring legal challenges or request recounts where State law allows. However, there is no legal right to file frivolous claims. Lawsuits must have a basis in facts and evidence. And make no mistake, there has been no evidence of any significant or widespread voter fraud.

Joe Biden won this election fair and square. The margins of his victory are growing by the day, and former President George W. Bush, commendably, acknowledged that fact when he congratulated President-Elect Biden and Vice President-Elect HARRIS on their victory.

Now Republican leaders in Congress should also do the right thing. Republican leaders must unequivocally condemn the President's rhetoric and work to ensure the peaceful transfer of power on January 20. I have been heartened to see a few of my Republican colleagues—it is three, I believe—congratulate the winning ticket, but too many, including the Republican leader,

have been silent or sympathetic to the President's fantasies.

Even some nonpartisan members of the current administration have refused to move forward with the formal process for the incoming administration. According to the Washington Post, the Administrator of the General Services Administration has declined to sign a letter allowing President-elect Joe Biden's transition team to formally begin its work.

It does not matter whether the President is happy about the results of the election. The peaceful transfer of power is a hallmark—the bedrock—of our democracy, and it must proceed unimpeded. The GSA Administrator should sign the paperwork immediately in order to allow the important work of the Presidential transition to proceed.

America remains in the middle of a worsening health and economic crisis, and there is no excuse—none—for the outgoing administration to impede the new administration's preparations to deal with these urgent challenges. There is no law or requirement that President Trump concede the election or leave the Office of the Presidency with grace, but as history prepares to write the final few sentences on the Trump Presidency, it will surely note how this President and his Republican allies here in Congress treated our democracy on his way out the door.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I believe under our original agreement, I am recognized next. Is that correct?

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. Yes, sir.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I appreciate what the Democratic leader has said. I was willing to step aside earlier when I had the floor because I understood the two leaders were coming to speak. It was a matter of courtesy to them, and I know the Democratic leader, at least, appreciated that.

Let me agree with what he said. You know, when I came here, the President of the United States was an unelected President, and there was an unelected Vice President. It was Jerry Ford. And then, under the change in our law since President Kennedy's death, he was able to pick an unelected Vice President. I remember Democrats and Republicans alike welcoming him and saying: Let's go forward.

I have been here with each President—some reelected, some not—and, in every instance, I see the outgoing President welcoming the incoming President, Republican or Democrat, and they have done it to try to make as smooth a transition not for their own political purposes but for the good of the United States of America. Everyone has done that.

I think it was George H.W. Bush welcoming Bill Clinton, who defeated him. I remember Al Gore had more votes than George W. Bush, but after the Court had ruled, he graciously con-

ceded to George W. Bush. I remember Hillary Clinton, with well over 2 million more votes than Donald Trump, but saying that here is what the electoral college is and conceded.

Now we see Joseph Biden, with more votes than anybody has ever gotten in the history of the United States for President, and the incumbent President goes off golfing again and again and pretends he doesn't have to step back, and, in fact, actually does everything possible to make it difficult for the new President to handle the transition.

That is wrong. Just as I have encouraged both Democrats and Republicans as President, you help the incoming President with transition, not for your political reasons or their political reasons but for the good of all of us as Americans. They are saying: Oh, no, we are going to hold the key to the door of the transition office.

Every Republican and every Democrat voted for the money for that transition office so that whoever is President could step forward and not hurt the country by coming in without doing the necessary preparation. They are like a little child in a playground: No, we got the key; we got the key. We are not going to share the key.

Oh, come on. Do you know how this makes us look to the rest of the world? Do you know how it makes us look in my State of Vermont, where some Republicans voted for Donald Trump and some voted for Joe Biden? The majority voted, in this case, for Joe Biden. But I have been hearing from Vermonters all over from both parties: What is going on? It is over. It is done for the country.

In that regard, let me just speak briefly about the President-elect and the Vice President-elect. When I came to this body, I was the most junior Member of the U.S. Senate and the second youngest. The youngest was a Senator from Delaware who had been elected just 2 years before, Joe Biden. I think of the fact that we were the two youngest, and we bonded over that, and I got to know his family.

I knew of the tragedy he had when his first wife and daughter were killed. He would go home every day to make sure that he could put his sons to bed and be there with them. I don't know how many times we would be standing down there in the well, and he was looking at his watch, and he said: What time do you think the last votes are going to be, because the next train to Delaware is at such and such time? He was like a marathon runner going out the door to make sure he got the train, which he did, to be home to take care of his children.

I remember how happy Marcelle and I were when we met Jill—what a wonderful woman. Dr. Biden was everything you would want in a First Lady in this country. We had the privilege of traveling with both of them and seeing the love and the joy they had in each other's company, the love and the joy

they have shown in their children and grandchildren, and continue to. I watched Joe Biden, with a sense of dignity, as he ran for election to the Presidency, an office he had hoped to hold and probably thought he never would.

I know that he wanted to run 4 years ago, but it was too close to the time of losing his son Beau. I had the privilege of knowing Beau. In fact, the last time I talked to him was on one of the battlefields in Iraq where he was serving in combat for our U.S. military. I told him at that time: You know, when I get back on the plane, I am going to call your father. I always do this when I meet a Vermonter in a war zone. I call their family and say they are doing well. I will call your dad and tell him.

When I got on the plane and connected with the White House operator, I remember then-Vice President Biden coming on. After a ways, he said: I know what you are going to say. I got an email from Beau.

I remember when Marcelle and I stood there and tears went down her face listening to President Obama eulogizing Beau at his funeral. We all felt as part of that family. So there was joy in the Leahy household when he was elected—not just a joy for the good of the country but the joy of seeing a person whom we know, love, and respect elected as President.

And added to that is the added advantage of KAMALA HARRIS, one of our Senate colleagues here. I remember when Senator HARRIS came to the Senate, and I was so happy to see her going on the Judiciary Committee because she had been such a good prosecutor and such a good attorney general. She was a woman who didn't need to have much of an orientation. She knew exactly what she was doing.

We have gotten to know her and her husband and admire her so. Then, when she spoke—as they accepted the fact that they were President and Vice President-elect—she said how proud she was to be there with President-Elect Biden and how proud she was to speak about her background and her immigrant parents coming here, the different races shown in her background, and what she was saying, as she said, to “women everywhere.” But I would say also what she shows to young women, those not old enough to vote, like my granddaughters, and they can look at that and say: That shows everything is open.

You know, I come from a State where it is unusual to be elected the first time because, well, I am the only Democrat ever elected to the U.S. Senate in Vermont's history, and the youngest also. I wasn't supposed to win. We were overwhelmingly a Republican State then. We have become now one of both parties. In the last election, for example, there was a Republican Governor. This year, in the last few days, our Republican Governor won overwhelmingly, and Molly Gray, a young woman that started out as an intern in my of-

fice and went to the University of Vermont, won comfortably and by a comfortable margin as a Democrat. But also, our Republican Governor said on election day that for the good of the country, to stop the dissension, to lower the kind of rhetoric we were hearing, he was going to vote for Joseph Biden.

Now, I mention that just as a microcosm in our State. But to go back to just a purely personal thing, Marcelle and I prayed for that day. We were so happy to see our friends. We were so happy to know they were there. And, as one who has known Joe Biden from the day I came into the Senate, I still remember, to this day, his coming over to greet me on the floor and saying: I am glad to see us young people here. I was about a year or so older than he, and we were sitting kind of in the junior role, and that friendship has lasted ever since.

I know Joe Biden. I know Jill Biden. I know the United States of America, and at a time when we are so torn apart, these are two people who can bring us back together.

I know KAMALA HARRIS. We know her wonderful husband. And here, my goodness, what a broad spectrum right there. In one way, it is unique. In another way, it is not the least bit unique. It is the face of America. It is the face of America. The diversity in our country of race, religion, everything—it is reflected in this ticket. It couldn't be better for the beginning of this century to have such a wide spectrum shown in the President and Vice President of the United States.

I think of what the mayor of Paris said. She issued a statement sort of to the effect of “Welcome back, America.” Well, this is an America that represents all of us. We should all get together to try to make it successful. If Senators disagree on a particular issue, vote up or down, but have the courage to vote. Have the courage to vote. Don't do what we have done this past year, refusing to vote on COVID as thousands upon thousands upon thousands of people die in our country. Have the courage to get up and vote. Vote yes or no.

We are here with 6-year terms. We ought to at least have the courage to vote yes or no. And then let's take a pause and say that these are the two who will be the face of America from noon, January 20.

From a personal point of view, that face reflects very much our family—our children and our grandchildren. I can see them in these four people, and I am proud of that.

I will admit that I have gotten a few emails from my Irish friends to say how much they are looking forward to a President Biden coming to Ireland, and they have forgiven me my Italian half with that. But I know that when I heard Joe Biden quoting Seamus Heaney during his campaign, I remember that he knows those Irish roots. But he, like his family, are first and

foremost Americans. Like his late, wonderful son Beau, they are first and foremost Americans.

KAMALA HARRIS speaks of her family, her ancestors coming here, her mother and father coming here, coming not to be anything other than Americans. They are as American as she is. She is as American as any of us.

I will close with this. Isn't it time the United States of America—a country that has become as diverse as you can imagine—can show their face to the rest of the world and say: This is who we are. And my grandchildren—my White grandchildren and my Black grandchildren—can look and say: Yes, that is who we are.

Joe and KAMALA, in a few days I will call you Mr. President and Madam Vice President, and I will do it with great pride. But I say today to my dear friends Joe and KAMALA: Congratulations. This Vermonter is very, very happy.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. ERNST). Without objection, it is so ordered.

ISSUES FACING AMERICA

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, we may be back to work carrying out what should be the normal business of the Senate, but from what I have observed, the American people really don't see this as just another day. They are a little bit anxious, and I really think that it is because, over the past week, they have witnessed some of the most divisive news cycles in recent memory.

Allegations of voter fraud are running rampant. These have been unanswered and ignored by most media outlets. Liberal operatives have sent up test balloons on the creation of official enemies lists. Think about that. We have them making enemies lists, wanting to execute a campaign of personal destruction against people with whom they disagree. What does that say about treasuring free speech?

The most popular social media platforms—oh—have honestly just outdone themselves by making matters worse by slapping these scary labels on content that is meant to inform and to spark bipartisan debate.

Then you have email services that are locking down access to email lists because the distribution is something with which they disagree. This is what has happened to millions of Americans. They gasp every time they see these markers on content, when they can't get to an email list, when they hear about a group they belong to that they can't hear from or communicate with.

Yes, it is censorship, and it is something that has divided people, families,